

23 July 1958

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Medical StaffVIA : Deputy Director/Support 151 Lkw JUL 26 1958  
SUBJECT : Attitude of Doctors on Medical Staff  
toward Employees

1. On several occasions in the years that I have been Inspector General I have received complaints from employees concerning what they term impolite or inconsiderate treatment in the Medical Office. Nearly all of these I have dismissed as being complaints from individuals who were either heavily rank conscious, who were impatient and expected efficiency beyond a reasonable degree, or were just generally dissatisfied personalities. However, I have recently personally heard of two incidents in which employees felt that the doctors were either rude or inconsiderate. Having been an Army officer and commanded my own unit, I am well acquainted with the types of goldbricks and chronic cry babies that are sure to exist in every organization. I am also well aware of the fact that we are giving our employees additional attention in the way of preventative medicine and clinical assistance which they would not normally receive in another government agency. I consider this to be a wise fringe benefit of career service, even though I recognize that there will be those who may attempt to abuse it. I would also add in the nature of a preamble, and perhaps to clarify my competence to observe on this situation, the fact that during the last six years I have had considerable contact with the medical profession, including eight months in four different hospitals. Thus, when I speak of the attitude of doctors, technicians, nurses, and medical administrative personnel, I have had a fairly extensive period of observation and have certain basic convictions.

2. It is my belief that those of our personnel who are concerned with the medical program should at all times take a human and humane interest in the welfare of our employees. This may well involve the cultivation of a type of "bedside manner" which they do not have when they arrive in the Agency. (I am strongly of the belief that our medical schools today, and the medical profession generally does not have the proper appreciation of the psychological impact of their attitude upon the patient.) Thus, I feel that in every case, regardless of whether the doctor feels that the employee may be presuming upon free medical treatment or may be a goldbrick or chronic complainer, he should be courteous, considerate, interested, and helpful. In fact, I would suggest that this attitude should permeate the Medical Staff.

3. Finally, although I recognize the inherent difficulties in medical scheduling, I would urge that everything possible be done to reduce to the absolute minimum the waiting time for individuals with appointments in the Medical Staff.

~~/s/ Lyman Kirkpatrick~~

Lyman B. Kirkpatrick  
Inspector General